



Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

27 September 1983

NOTE TO: Hugh Montgomery
Director, State/INR

Hugh -

The attached is the memo the Secretary requested. I appreciate your help in getting it to him as quickly and privately as possible.

Bob.

Robert M. Gates
Deputy Director for Intelligence



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NOTE TO: The Secretary of State

Mr. Secretary:

As you requested last Saturday morning after breakfast, I have jotted down some thoughts along the lines that I was expressing at the table. They are strictly personal. I hope they are of some use to you.

Thank you for including me in the breakfast.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Gates".

Robert M. Gates
Deputy Director for Intelligence

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27 September 1983

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: US-Soviet Relations (Further on Breakfast Conversation)

1. It is probably true that US-Soviet relations are as pervasively bleak now -- and prospectively -- as at any time since Stalin's death. Yet while Washington typically regards history as beginning with the last inauguration, the Soviet perspective is longer. So should ours be.

2. From the standpoint of both sides, "detente" quickly soured. As early as the 1973 Yom Kippur War, many in the US judged that detente had not changed Soviet behavior much. From the Soviet side, defeat of the US-USSR Trade Act in the US Senate in January 1975 signaled trouble. Since at least the mid-1970s, with only a few brief promising moments, the relationship has deteriorated more or less steadily. The roll call of actions and reactions on both sides during the past eight years adversely affecting the relationship is impressive (and instructive).

- 1975: The Trade Act; Soviet intervention with Cuba in Angola; massive Soviet help to Hanoi resulting in US expulsion from Vietnam; cancellation of a range of bilateral meetings; quarrelling over the meaning of the Vladivostok Accords on SALT II; and the change in tone at the end of the year in the US pre-election climate amid charges of a sell-out in Helsinki at CSCE.
- 1976: Public abandonment by US of "detente" and stalemate on bilateral issues during the US elections.
- 1977: The new US President's letter to Sakharov and human rights offensive; US abandonment of Vladivostok approach in SALT for a radical deep cuts approach; no progress on arms control; Soviet support for insurgencies in Southern Africa; intense Soviet propaganda against deployment of the Enhanced Radiation Weapon (ERW or neutron bomb).
- 1978: Soviet-Cuban intervention in Ethiopia; US normalization of relations with China; MIG 23 in Cuba issue; Korean airliner shootdown; first US measures on technology transfer.

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- 1979: MX decision; Soviet brigade in Cuba controversy; US Ambassador killed in Kabul; Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; Soviet-Cuban support for Nicaraguan revolution; NATO agrees to deploy INF; failure of SALT II.
- 1980: US sanctions in response to Afghanistan; US warnings on Poland; US promoted boycott of Olympics; US election.
- 1981-83: This period is more familiar and the list of bilateral problems is long, culminating in the second Korean airliner shootdown.

3. This long but still incomplete listing is offered to make two points:

- The halcyon days of US-Soviet detente lasted less than 2 1/2 years in the early 1970s and the trend in the bilateral relationship has been generally downhill under three successive Presidents of both parties. (Some would begin the decline with the Yom Kippur War, thus including a fourth President -- the one who began the process).
- Every time an opportunity to begin reversing that downward trend has presented itself -- and there have been some -- events or actions in Washington, Moscow or in the Third World have killed the opening. In short, the Soviets see their problems with the US as transcending this Administration. And this makes overall developments and the future all the more worrisome to them.

4. There is no doubt they see this Administration as more dangerous than its predecessors -- but less because of its attitudes and rhetoric than the fact it has been more successful than its predecessors in countering the USSR in at least three major areas:

- Defense. A massive US rearmament long feared by the Soviets threatens to offset their strategic gains 20 years in the making.
- Third World. The US and its friends are causing the Soviets real trouble in Afghanistan, Mozambique, Chad, Angola, Namibia, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua. The kind of moves the Soviets made easily in 1975-1979 are now more complicated and difficult. Momentum seems to be changing.
- INF. Defeat of ERW in 1978-79 was a major Soviet victory, vindicating "differentiated" detente which set the US aside and focused on the West Europeans.

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Deployment of INF will be a major Soviet defeat, far offsetting ERW strategically and calling into doubt an important Soviet objective of detente -- undermining European commitment to strengthening NATO militarily.

5. All this has taken place against a backdrop in Moscow of Brezhnev's long physical decline and Andropov's succession. Despite a good deal of wishful thinking in the West, Andropov is the first General Secretary to come from within the security service-military sector; he shares their values and ruthlessness and depends upon their political support. I believe that Moscow's behavior in the Yom Kippur war and its turn to more aggressive exploitation of Third World opportunities in 1974-75 was due in some measure to the elevation to the Politburo in 1973 of Andropov, Gromyko and Defense Minister Grechko (Succeeded by Ustinov in 1976). Their influence in foreign affairs became clearly dominant as Brezhnev's vigor declined in the mid to late '70s. They now control that policy. While some point out (and take encouragement from) broad "continuity" in Soviet foreign policy since Brezhnev's death, I would suggest this derives from Andropov-Ustinov-Gromyko domination of that policy before Brezhnev died -- a policy of aggressive intervention in the Third World, the opening to China, and brute force where deemed necessary and low risk (as in Afghanistan). They are a very tough bunch. And, as you noted at breakfast, Andropov's supposed mastery of clever manipulation and political maneuvering has not prevented them from some pretty ham handed efforts at bullying and intimidation when a lighter touch would have paid them important benefits (even as inspiring fear sometimes pays benefits).

6. All that said, and despite the past eight years or so of post-detente problems, the Russians -- in my view -- still recognize the need to do business with the US and will do it with this Administration, but probably not until 1985. They cannot "write off" any Administration and are prepared to be patient for the US side "to come around". A range of economic, political and strategic motives impels the USSR to cultivate ties with the US, though not at any price. The past eight to ten years repeatedly have illuminated Soviet limits:

- They will not abandon an active role in the Third World, promoting radical causes and anti-Western movements. Indeed, while they will move cautiously where the US has great prepondance of military power (e.g., Central America), their cost-benefit calculus elsewhere probably has shifted toward greater risk-taking.
- They will not tolerate attempts to interfere in or change their domestic policies, for example, on human rights. They will, however, use Soviet Jews, dissidents and political prisoners as bait or "trading truck" with the US.

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- They will not allow the US to use arms control to restructure Soviet strategic forces; they will not dismantle their heavy missile force to satisfy us on throwweight.
- They will not be cowed by threat of sanctions or of economic warfare; they know the Europeans and Japanese too well.
- They will abandon none of their global pretensions or ambitions; the best that can be achieved is a stable stand off in Europe and between the US and Soviet strategic forces (whether through arms control or tacit arrangements), and some thawing in atmosphere -- reduction of tensions. Hopes for (and promises of) more have contributed to bilateral tensions (and political problems here).

The Next Year

7. Given the foregoing, what specifically can we expect in the next year? The bilateral prospects are bleak. The KAL shootdown makes it difficult for the US to initiate a dialogue at least for the rest of this year. We will then be in the midst of INF deployment and the Soviet reaction thereto. They will react and I predict one or another of their early responses will further worsen US-USSR relations. By then the US will be in the middle of an election campaign, during which the Soviets will be hoping with all their hearts for defeat of the President. Even if they conclude he will be re-elected, it would come too late to cut a quick arms control deal. In sum, I believe bilateral relations will be in a deep freeze until 1985 when the US will be in a position to seize the initiative. The Soviets probably will make new offers in INF and START this fall, but they almost certainly will not provide a basis for compromise or agreement.

8. Elsewhere:

- Middle East: Syria holds high cards in Lebanon and the Soviets will continue to stake Assad. They probably believe the changes are good for eventual emergence of a pro-Syrian government in Beirut. To bolster Assad, the Russians could send a token detachment of troops to Damascus, as well as new tactical surface to surface missiles, pilots and more aircraft. They are helping to rearm the PLO. They will not themselves militarily challenge US and Israeli power in Lebanon, but no doubt see opportunities to tie up American forces there indefinitely -- with growing political costs in the US and in the Arab world -- even as they work to block negotiated outcomes. Their worries probably are that Israel will re-enter the fray if Syrian or PLO role becomes too threatening and that US power will somehow induce Assad to compromise.

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- Third World: The prospects are for greater military and subversive intimidation of Pakistan's Zia and the Iranians to reduce their support for Afghan insurgents; continued indirect support of Nicaragua coupled with warnings to both Havana and Managua that they not provoke the US too seriously; greater attention to opportunities in the Philippines, especially if the situation there worsens, and in Chile; continued support for Qadhafi's destabilizing efforts in Central and West Africa; and continued efforts to improve relations with China.
- Europe and Japan: Once INF deployment begins, the Soviet focus will shift to preventing full deployment both diplomatically and by making deployment as painful and costly domestically as possible. The FRG will be the main target both for intimidation and persuasion. The economic card will be flashed prominently. Intimidation will be the order of the day vis-a-vis Japan in an attempt to tone down or "de-fang" Nakasone.

9. In sum, the next year will see the Soviet Union pursuing a continued aggressive policy in the Third World, taking a tough line on INF deployments and waiting out the US elections in anticipation of a change for the better in 1985 whoever is elected.

10. Given this bleak forecast, how do we get through the next year without a further dangerous increase in tensions? The major foreseeable problem will be the Soviet response to INF and the US response to that. Missiles in Eastern Europe are probably the minimum possible Soviet reaction, perhaps with a periodic deployment of cruise missile carrying submarines near US coasts (analogous response). They cannot do this all at once, so it would extend over several months. A matter of fact US response to these long anticipated developments would help avoid an action-reaction-action-reaction cycle that could get out of hand. We need to keep our eye clearly on our political and strategic objectives and not get caught up in one-upmanship.

11. Beyond this the relationship might be kept from deteriorating further by proceeding with routine business and meetings, making clear to Moscow our understanding that some lines of communications must be kept open. An important role in this can be played by Art Hartman in Moscow and State's dealings with Dobrynin here -- no effusive warmth but correct, candid conversations. As mentioned at the breakfast, a new initiative on confidence building measures could form part of a substantive agenda for such conversations -- and be very consistent with global concerns growing out of the KAL shootdown. A continued business-like approach at START will help. These types of actions, if done properly, need not involve the US signaling eagerness to resume business as usual, but rather a need to keep


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talking to one another. Use of the Ambassadors is unobtrusive and does not convey high level eagerness "to get on with it" that some sort of senior private envoy or intermediary suggests. In my view this sort of keeping the lines open is the best way to get through the year and to set the stage for possibly some improvement in the relationship in 1985.

12. A note of caution to close. I mentioned above the times in recent years when promising dialogue has been cut short by events. There are all too many places these days where such events can take place. It will take considerable skill and luck just to keep things from getting even worse during the next year.

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Robert M. Gates

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